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ABSTRACT

This treatise on teacher education includes priorities for higher education and agendas for the next president and Congress, governors and state legislators. A discussion is included on priorities for reform in teacher education. Progress in campus-based teacher education programs is noted in the areas of raising academic standards, applying research-based information about effective teaching, recruiting able students into teaching, and strengthening the accreditation process for teacher education programs. (JD)

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COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S CHILDREN

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FOREWORD

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education is a national professional association of institutions that share a common goal to prepare the best teachers and principals, counselors and administrators who will educate the nation's children. Each year, our 710 members prepare more than 85 percent of new teachers and other school professionals.

Through our mutual efforts with practicing teachers, school administrators, and public policy makers, our members are continuously exploring ways to strengthen the scholarship of teacher education programs, the faculty who teach the courses, and the administrators who guide the process. The success of the programs depend in large measure on the environment in which they operate, an environment dictated to a great extent by the actions of federal, state, and local governments. Resources are, of course, what empower successful change. In today's world, successful organizations are those that can build partnerships and collaborative relationships with others where everyone shares resources and all get more. That is the essence of our commitment to America's children.

I would like to acknowledge the work of a team of teacher educators and school of education administrators who prepared this document: David L. Colton of the University of New Mexico, Robert L. Egbert of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Jerome T. Murphy of Harvard University, Raphael O. Nystrand of the University of Louisville, and Diane L. Reinhard of West Virginia University.

Eugene E. Eubanks
AACTE President

August 1988

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COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S CHILDREN

In June of 1988, U.S. high schools graduated 2.3 million teenagers into a world of massive challenge and complexity and of unprecedented opportunity. Already, these young people had witnessed the ravages of inflation and recession; dizzying advances in communications technology; phenomenal breakthroughs in scientific research; unimaginable achievements in medical care; an escalation of arms production attended by an easing of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union; an end to the Vietnam conflict; new outbreaks of regional conflict, violence, and terrorism; abject poverty and hunger suffered by millions of people in a world of relative plenty; national debt burdens of crippling magnitude for world commerce and trade along with shifting fortunes in the international competition for economic superiority.

They had shared the excitement of men and women working in space, they had experienced fear and helplessness in the face of the AIDS crisis, and they had barely noted in passing the barrage of other developments and events that will affect their lives in a profound way. These new graduates had lived under the national leadership of four presidents and nine Congresses, and would be eligible to cast their first votes as citizens in the 1988 elections.

Another 3.4 million children are enrolled in the first grade for the 1988-89 school year. Most will emerge in a dozen years as the first high school graduates of the 21st century.

How well will they be equipped to understand and manage the world they will enter in the year 2001? What will be their grasp of knowledge and ideas intended to help them to communicate effectively, to enable them to make sound decisions in a democratic society and to plan their own futures while contributing as a positive force to the nation's social and economic development?

Teachers

The answer to these and related questions lies in large part with the teachers who will touch their lives and enliven their minds along the way. For teachers are in a position, at once enviable and daunting, to affect young lives more deeply than any other influencers save parents who themselves are products of and participants in the teaching-learning process.

One elementary school teacher, in his or her career, helps shape the lives of more than 750 children; the number may be four times greater—3,000 students—for a high school teacher, according to David C. Smith, dean of the College of Education at the University of Florida. When one multiplies those figures by the number of graduates from a college of education each year, Smith calculated, the influence of a teacher education program becomes awesome—300,000 high school students taught during the careers of only 100 teacher education graduates in, say, the class of 1988 at a state university. "And these," Smith said "are conservative estimates."

The torrent of change and challenge in our students' lives is no less a potent factor in the lives of teachers. In most cases, teachers deal with decades, even generations of innovation and modification. They are like mountain climbers on a changing landscape. Everest may lie beyond the pale, beyond the teacher's field of vision, but never beyond the teacher's range of influence—the teacher as enabler. It remains for the student to find and scale Everest, surpassing and honoring the teacher in a singular achievement.

Our embattled teachers, whose uneven sway over the lives of many renders them easy prey for the head-bashers of society, must continually marshal the resources to convey to students the ethic of hard work rewarded and to relate the study of subjects to the stuff of life. This summons calls for special training as well as subject mastery on the part of the teacher. And yet, how often we hear it said that anyone who is well schooled in the liberal arts can teach. Experience suggests otherwise.

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Teacher Education

More than 1,200 colleges and universities across the United States now offer teacher preparation programs. Though size and scope of mission

vary widely, virtually all teacher candidates pursue programs that include general studies, intensive concentration in one of the liberal arts, and professional education, which itself embraces courses in the psychological-social foundations of teaching and learning, courses in curriculum, instructional strategies, and supervised practice. The particular teaching specialty selected by the student governs the discrete distribution of courses in the program for that student.

While mastery of one's subject is essential to fulfillment and success in teaching, it is rarely if ever enough. "While you can produce a whole car through specialization," James Billington of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars reminds us, "you cannot produce a whole person that way. And without whole people who have strong civic involvement and deep personal convictions and commitments, democracy cannot function." And Jacques Barzun cautions that "the expert specialist takes a little subject for his province—and remains a provincial all his life."

Beyond subject matter, however steeped one may be in a discipline, good teaching requires specialized knowledge about how children think and learn at succeeding stages of their lives; about the selection and presentation of concepts and course content appropriate to those stages of development; about proven strategies and materials in the teaching process, when and how to impart or adapt them in accordance with students' varied abilities and cultural backgrounds; and about recognizing and coping with learning difficulties experienced by students. How to motivate youngsters in a classroom, how to design and execute lessons, how to sustain interest, how to evaluate student progress—all these are but a sampling of the professional know-how of well-trained teachers. The knowledge and skills are, more often than not, acquired and practiced in teacher preparation programs whose elements must be as painstakingly planned and supervised as the training components in such other professions as law and medicine.

"Anyone," says Mary Griffin, former dean of the Boston College School of Education, "can become an outstanding teacher. You just have to be dedicated, original, compassionate, loving, persistent, enthusiastic,

selfless, fair and unforgettable." And it helps to be Solomonic. Every day, the teacher makes countless decisions that can seriously affect the students' future. Bad decisions, no less than good, are often irretrievable.

Most teachers spend five to six hours a day directly engaged with large contingents of disparate students in close quarters, the classroom. Before and after that engagement, they attend to the many tasks that go with it: understanding student needs, planning instruction and creating or sorting out instructional material, grading papers, brushing up on subject content and research findings, conferring with parents and counselors, consulting with other teachers and service personnel, and meeting with students for individualized help. Without preparation and training, a teacher facing these tasks is like a sailor without a compass, a chart, and a log—not to mention a life raft. But the process of teaching is more than mechanics, more than a mere means to an end; it becomes an extension of the self, enlivened by insights that the process unfolds and by attention to detail, to originality, to give and take, to listening. At the same time, a grounding in liberal education helps the teacher to keep faith with historical truth, with commonly held values, and to renew trust in a shared vision of a promising future.

***Education:
A shared
responsibility***

Education in America is primarily a state responsibility with local initiative playing a key role. But educators, parents, and public policymakers recognize that certain vital aspects of education lie beyond the state's capacity or jurisdiction. Basically, they are functions related to national goals and aspirations, dealing with equity in opportunity and support; with research, development, and statistics; and—turning specifically to the teaching profession—with teacher preparation for special needs including education of gifted, disadvantaged, handicapped, and foreign-language students. Student aid, incentive grants, and programs of recognition for excellence in teaching (e.g., the McAuliffe Fellowships) are examples of publicly espoused federal interventions in education.

Ever since adoption of the Cooperative Research Act of 1954, educational research conducted or sponsored by the federal government has

made a significant contribution to our strong system of teacher preparation as well as to other facets of the educational enterprise. And who but the federal government could effectively address the problem of teacher shortages in specific subject areas? Through incentive programs, federal initiatives have drawn talented students to such fields as science and mathematics. More recently, the Congress and the Administration together have recognized the need for similar incentives to encourage minority students to become teachers. The recent widening gap between rich and poor, White and Black, in the United States is a national scandal that calls on the federal government for remediation. In a *U.S. News & World Report* editorial (July 25, 1988), Mortimer B. Zuckerman wrote: "America cannot stand tall when it saves so little for investment in private enterprise and commercial research and development and sets aside so little from taxes for scholarships, our public-school and university systems and long-term infrastructure investment. Given the ebb of the cold war, our future depends as much on the productivity of SAT scores as on the destructivity of ICBM's."

Just as the states delegate to local districts the authority for operating schools, they delegate to institutions of higher education the burden of responsibility for preparing teachers and other school personnel. In recent years, however, states have begun to assert more vigorously their authority over teacher preparation, in some cases to the detriment of the students who will become teachers. Mounting state concern is reflected in new mandates for testing, in specifications and restrictions in the content of professional education programs, and in increased regulation of college and university teacher education programs—not all bad, but certainly not all good.

Local governments, meanwhile, bear the responsibility to assure that school personnel meet the highest standards. School board members and leaders of parents' organizations increasingly insist on adequately prepared teachers, graduates of accredited institutions, as classroom instructors in their districts. They also seek to attract the numbers and kinds of teachers that will obviate the vexing problem of assigning teachers to instruct in subjects outside their fields. And finally, these local advocates work to en-

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sure that resources are made available to support a teaching-learning environment reflective of good schooling.

Reform reformed: Priorities for teacher education

Reform has been the watchword in teacher education circles during the 1980s. Examples are the reports of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and others advocating reform accompanied by more teacher participation in decisions about preparation and credentialing. But teacher educators have done far more than air the problems and what to do about them. They've worked, individually and collectively, toward raising educational standards and performance. More specifically, campus-based teacher education programs have made progress by:

- raising academic standards,
- producing, disseminating, and applying research-based information about effective teaching,
- more aggressively recruiting able students as candidates for teaching, and
- strengthening, in cooperation with teachers' organizations, the accreditation process for teacher education programs.

In recognition of this reform thrust, Johnson Foundation President William Boyd commented, "The most encouraging development in the past five years is that the quality and quantity of students preparing for a career in teaching are up. If only one gain could have been made, that would have been the most desirable one." There's no question that, collectively, these reform efforts, accompanied by stronger ties between classroom teachers and university educators, have raised the quality of teaching as well as the professional status of teachers. But the reform march is far from over. AACTE recognizes the need for policies and practices that will sustain the movement and empower it to meet head-on the challenges of this century's closing decade—to set the stage, in the process, for the well-schooled debut of those first high school graduates of the 21st century.

The agenda for this advance should focus on these priorities:

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1. Prepare a new work force of educators for assignments in a school environment of more rapid change and greater diversity, requiring of the teachers a more global perspective and a familiarity with sophisticated techniques and technology.

In the decade ahead, according to government projections, almost half of our current teachers will retire or change careers. Those who succeed them will venture into a world of rising public expectations for our schools, of expanding student diversity, declining parental support, and competing community values. They will have to keep abreast of advances in communications technology as books and lectures make room for computers, recording and viewing devices, and other high-tech paraphernalia for transmitting information. Only by understanding the capabilities and limitations of this gathering array of teaching tools will the instructor be able to safeguard the ordered progress of each student toward intellectual maturity. For the human factor in the teaching-learning process will only gain in importance as we move toward a new century. "All the talk about excellence in education," says Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, "is superficial unless we acknowledge that good teaching is at the heart of good schools."

2. Implant in the educational system a concept of reform that is enduring, progressive, proactive, and of such a compelling order that its programs and proposals merit generous public support.

To achieve educational superiority, this nation cannot afford to view reform as a sometime thing, a reactive mechanism to counter recurring crises. Rather, our educational leadership must instill abiding faith in the enterprise by anticipating change and future needs. All too often in the recent past, education has been caught in a defensive position, imposed by survival issues, which deflected our people from first principles. History informs us that in periods when learning is in full flower, when the teaching profession is seen as honorable and respectable, and when the educational system is at its most robust, so then also is the commonweal in a healthy, dynamic condition.

Two recent reports by distinguished bodies emphasized the centrality of teacher education to educational reform. Both the National Commission on Excellence in Education's *A Nation At Risk* and the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession in *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* concluded that teaching and teacher education needed improvement, and both recommended program reforms. Reform movements, however, must acknowledge the role of the educational professional in the decision-making process. Again Mary Griffin, a teacher of teachers, bemoans the "disheartening fact that virtually nothing in the reform documents or proposals written during the last four years speaks to quality teaching. For the most part," according to Griffin, "we are hearing self-appointed Brahmins, rather than educators themselves, pontificating in quasi-Spencerian fashion about what knowledge is of most worth."

Educators and policymakers together must determine which of the many recommendations before them will make a real difference in the quality of teachers, and then find ways to carry those policies forward.

3. Renew commitment to knowledge production and application.

Knowledge, as Henry Adams taught us, tends to increase exponentially—a mixed blessing for those who teach. To help our people keep apace and, at the same time, to dispel confusion, helplessness, and isolation, the teaching profession must lead the way in applying research and development to the educational adventure. Teachers and teacher educators will have to be in the forefront of determining the wise uses of new knowledge and helping to formulate reasonable points of view in dealing with complexity. They must seek a balance between the knowledge explosion, its coherence, and the nation's shared values.

Data from 30 years of research about teaching and learning now informs policies and practices in preservice teacher education, as well as in graduate education and inservice education of teachers at the district level—all to the good. It is essential that support for teaching and learning be bolstered for the further enrichment of teacher education programs if our country is to emerge intact from the 20th century as a world-affairs leader.

4. Recruit and train qualified people for teaching in critical areas of need.

It seems like only yesterday—actually, it was in the 1970s—that the nation had a surplus of teachers. Recently, shortages have occurred in certain fields of study and in certain geographic regions. To fill these vacancies, school districts too often have resorted to granting emergency certification and to assigning teachers to subjects outside their field of expertise. The teaching profession must lead in redressing these imbalances.

More serious is the changing character of the student population and what this implies for the teaching profession and teacher education. Even now minority teachers are in short supply. By the mid-1990s, the representation of minority students is expected to rise to 30 percent, while the number of minority teachers will drop perilously to about five percent. If these projections hold, what will be the effects on the national policy in the 21st century? What will be their impacts on an informed citizenry, a competent work force, on community in America, on equality, peace and tranquility?

Walter E. Massey of the University of Chicago warns us that this problem "is potentially very serious because minority groups more and more represent the future of America. Blacks and Hispanics will be to America what the first generation college attendees from other ethnic groups were 50 years ago." And, says Massey, "to the extent that minority groups do not take advantage of the opportunities education offers, America as a whole will be impoverished."

**A shared
Agenda**

Working with practitioners and other education professionals, institutions of higher education will continue to seek ways to improve their teacher preparation programs. However, their success will depend in large measure on the environment in which they operate, an environment dictated to a great extent by actions of federal and state governments. Accordingly, federal and state policymakers and the people they represent have an important stake in advancing a positive agenda.

**Agenda
for the Next
Administration
and Congress**

Return funding for education research and improvement to 1972 constant dollar levels. When the National Institute of Education (NIE) was first funded in 1973, it received approximately \$100.5 million in 1972 constant dollar obligations; in 1986, the programs that made up NIE, now part of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, were funded at \$51 million, which is only \$22.5 million in 1972 constant dollars. This 78 percent reduction in research funding will be felt for years to come.

The \$51 million in U.S. research and development for education is divided among programs of short-term research, development, and dissemination. The federal government supports no basic research in education; that is, no money is available for research that leads to an increased understanding of the fundamental nature of human development and learning, or for longitudinal studies. Returning support for research, development, and statistics to the 1972 constant dollar levels would mean an expenditure of \$250 million—approximately a one percent increase in the Department of Education's total budget. Surely, some of the hundreds of millions that contractors overcharge the Pentagon can be better spent on research that holds the promise of improved education for all of our children.

This increased allocation should fund a balanced research and development program that includes:

- basic research, including longitudinal studies, in such areas as child and adolescent development and learning, teacher characteristics and recruitment, teacher preparation and continuing education, and school and curriculum organization;
- increased support for educational research and development centers, regional education laboratories, and the system of ERIC clearinghouses; and
- a program for effective dissemination of research information among college and university teacher education programs, including a combination of pilot/demonstration projects and a deans' grant program similar to that used for several years in special education.

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Initiate a plan to assist in recruiting and preparing minority teachers. The federal government should implement and support

- programs of direct grants and loans to attract highly qualified minority students into teacher education and to retain them through graduation, and
- programs to assist and encourage states and districts to provide counseling, scholarships, and loans to middle school and high school minority students; educators would work with community and religious leaders to encourage youths to become teachers.

Agenda for Governors, State Legislators, and State Boards of Education

Establish and maintain rigorous standards for teacher certification and for programs that prepare teachers. There should be no shortcuts that dilute the teacher's preparation, and all who are part of the process should be held to the same standards. These standards should be professionally developed and enforced.

Encourage and support improvement and reform in teacher education. In an attempt to open alternative routes to certification, some states have relaxed standards, permitting a great deal of freedom to local school districts and other agencies in preparing teachers for certificates. At the same time, they have maintained rigid requirements for college and university teacher preparation programs. If states are seriously interested in maintaining quality while developing new approaches to teacher preparation, they should hold all who are engaged in teacher preparation to the same strict standards of accountability.

Avoid policy decisions that will compromise the tradition of academic freedom in institutions of higher learning. Some states impose unrealistic restrictions on the number of professional education courses that prospective teachers can take. Such restrictions are particularly inappropriate for elementary teachers who must teach the total curriculum and usually must be prepared to teach children from five to twelve years of age. These teachers must have a grasp of the appropriate content for

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children of different ages, teaching strategies adaptable to the various needs of students, methods of diagnosing learning difficulties, and ways of evaluating each child's progress. For the beginning teacher, mastering this range of content, strategies, and skills requires a great deal of time and individual attention. Two or three education courses will not suffice.

Review the impact of statewide testing policies on teachers. Most education reports of the past few years have urged that teachers have opportunities for advancing their professional role. Statewide testing programs for K-12 students, however, may effectively remove much of a teacher's opportunity to make key professional decisions. Both individual teachers and entire districts may shift their instructional focus to particular state-selected tests, thus excluding other important curricular considerations, inadvertently narrowing the breadth of educational offerings, and stifling the creativity of teaching.

Encourage increased collaboration between schools and higher education. School districts and institutions of higher learning should have more incentives to work together on joint educational projects. These might include such traditional activities as induction programs for new teachers, as well as new kinds of professional partnerships in research or school improvement activities.

Provide the funding required for clinical, field-based teacher preparation programs. Funding for higher education and for teacher education programs varies by state. Policymakers should recognize that an important part of a new teacher's education—field-based experience—requires a greater commitment of resources than traditional classroom lectures. Adjustments in funding formulas to reflect this reality would allow institutions to expand the nature and quality of a prospective teacher's clinical work.

Initiate programs that assist schools and higher education institutions to collaborate with various community groups in encouraging and

assisting minority children to prepare to become teachers. Recruiting more minority students into teaching is a complex issue that will require the commitment of government, higher education, and our communities. Collaborative programs between colleges and universities and community-based organizations hold promise to change attitudes about teaching and schools among minority youth. A modest investment in this kind of program could yield impressive results.

Provide targeted scholarship programs for persons to enter teaching. States are in the best position to assess the need for teachers in certain disciplines or with certain backgrounds. Many states offer scholarships as an incentive for young people to enter teaching. Such programs should be continued and expanded with attention to attracting traditionally underserved populations into teaching careers.

Provide explicit funding for educational research and development activities, including policy studies, that are central to the education concerns of the state. The federal government has traditionally been the catalyst for stimulating educational research. However, the unique needs of states and regions require that other levels of government share this commitment. Allocation of half of one percent of a state's education budget for research and evaluation studies would contribute to a dramatic increase in knowledge about how children learn and about the best ways to educate them.

Toward a new century

As educators and policymakers, we have made significant strides in improving public education, but in fairness to the nation's students and our collective future, we must direct even more of our resources and talents toward school improvement. It would be shortsighted of us to stop now and rest on our achievements. We have a moral obligation to educate every child to reach his or her potential; we also have the nation's self-interest at stake. Our commitment is to an excellent education for every child.

Our public education system is called upon to do much more than teach the three Rs. In the words of noted educator and clergyman Theodore Hesbergh, "Our best goal is not just to educate in a thousand different ways, but to give a vision to truth, that might well lead young people to nobility of spirit and a commitment to do what each can do to create a world of greater justice and beauty. We desire to educate persons really capable of shaping the future, not dull drab practitioners of what is, has been, and still needs changing."

Therein lies the dream of the American people, who consider education to be the nation's top concern in this election year, according to a recent Gallup poll conducted for the National Education Association.

Therein lies the pledge of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, which sees teacher education as the cornerstone supporting educational improvement through the highest quality preparation programs, improved research and development, and the closest collaboration with schools.

Therein lies the vision of continuing intellectual growth for the members of the class of 2001 and those to follow.



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